

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10-23 and 25 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 25 being the independent claims. Claims 2, 6, 9, and 24 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 1, 20, and 25 are amended. The amendments of claims 1 and 25 are supported by FIGs. 4a-4d, 5b, 5c, 6b, 6c, 7a and 7b, and by p. 15, line 13 to p. 16, line 3, and by p. 17. line 18 to p. 18, line 6. The amendment of claim 20 corrects a typographical error. These changes therefore introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above Amendment and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Allowed Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 12 and 14 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. These claims currently depend on claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended so as to be allowable, as discussed below. For this reason, claims 12 and 14, as currently written, are allowable.

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner's objections to the specification have been addressed by the above amendment.

Additional text from the paragraphs starting on p. 12, line 20 and p. 13, line 17 has been deleted in order to be consistent with the figures.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 2, 6, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §112. These claims have been canceled by the amendment above.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-11, 13, and 15-24, arguing that these claims are anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,691,373 (“Lederer”). Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the claimed subject matter. Claim 1 now recites that “said first sliding-contact surface is curved such that its distance from an axis of said cylinder increases in a circumferential direction about the axis, and said second sliding-contact surface is curved such that its distance from the axis decreases in the circumferential direction.” Therefore, proceeding in a given circumferential direction, the distance between the first sliding-contact surface and the cylinder axis grows progressively greater because of the curvature of the first sliding-contact surface. Proceeding in the same direction, the second sliding-contact surface grows progressively closer to the cylinder axis because of the curvature of the second sliding-contact surface. Lederer fails to disclose a pair of sliding contact surfaces that is shaped and oriented in this way. Therefore Lederer fails to anticipate claim 1 as amended.

Claims 2-11, 13, and 15-24 all depend on claim 1. Each of these claims therefore includes all

features of claim 1. Because Lederer fails to disclose all features of claim 1, Lederer also fails to disclose all features of any of claims 2-11, 13, and 15-24. Lederer therefore fails to anticipate any of claims 2-11, 13, and 15-24.

The Examiner also argues that independent claim 25 is anticipated by Lederer. Claim 25 has been amended for clarification purposes. This claim now recites that “there are at least a convergent portion and a divergent portion of said slideway assembly in which said sliding-contact surfaces respectively converge and diverge vertically when viewed in a circumferential direction.” Therefore, in one portion of the slideway assembly, the sliding-contact surfaces converge vertically as viewed along a given circumferential direction. In another portion of the slideway assembly, the surfaces diverge vertically as viewed in the same circumferential direction.

Lederer discloses no such feature. Considering FIG. 4a of Lederer, when viewed in a circumferential direction (clockwise, for example), the sliding-contact surfaces appear to diverge. But, again proceeding clockwise, there is no portion in which the sliding contact surfaces converge. Hence Lederer fails to disclose all features of claim 25 as amended. Claim 25 is therefore not anticipated by this reference.


Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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In the Drawings:

Corrected drawing sheets are filed herewith. FIG. 2 is corrected pursuant to the Examiner's comment regarding reference letter D. FIGs. 3a, 3b, 4d, 5a-5c, 6a-6c, and 7a are corrected to address drafting and typographical errors. In FIG. 3a, the reference 14b_l is corrected to 14b₁. Similar corrections have been made throughout FIGs. 3a, 3b, 4d, 5a-5c, 6a-6c, and 7a in order to be consistent with earlier figures and with the specification. Also in FIG. 3a, the downward pointing arrowhead of reference d has been extended to the next lower line, again to be consistent with the specification. In FIG. 3b, the downward pointing arrowhead of reference e has been extended to the next lower line, to be consistent with the specification. Also, the lower arrowhead of arc β has been extended to the next lower line, again to be consistent with the specification. Also in FIG. 3b, the reference c₂ has been corrected to c₄. In FIG. 4d, the reference 20 is changed to indicate the next lower component, to be consistent with the specification. These corrections introduce no new matter.